



**NSO**  
Symphony Orchestra  
ان.اس.او. الأوركسترا السيمفونية

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## PRESS RELEASE

November 9, 2014 • For Immediate Release

### HAPPY EVER AFTER FOR FANTASTIC FAIRY TALE CONCERT IN NSO CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES

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**Abu Dhabi, UAE. 9 November 2014** – It was a resounding 'happy ever after' for concertgoers at NSO's latest performance in its chamber music series last night with the Abu Dhabi Premiere of "The Story of Babar" by French Composer Francis Poulenc.

The concert at BCAD auditorium, which also featured famous works on children's fairy tales by Mozart, Ravel and Fauré, showcased the musical virtuosity of the NSO Chamber Music Ensemble, the NSO String Quartet, Concert Pianist Ioannis Potamouisis, and Piano Duo Alex Tchobanov and Robert Millner.

Janet Hassounah, NSO Symphony Orchestra Founder and Executive Director, expressed her delight with the audience's overwhelming response to the performance: "The enduring popularity of 'Babar', as well as the other well-known fairy tales set to music resonated fantastically with our audience, which goes to show you're never too old to enjoy the classics!"





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"It is such an honour for us at the NSO Symphony Orchestra to perform for appreciative music-lovers who value the hard work required for such musically demanding works, making the night's performance a resounding success."

Poulenc's "The Story of Babar", based on the children book by Jean de Brunhoff ("Histoire de Babar, Le Petit Elephant"), was originally written by Poulenc in 1940 for Piano and Narrator and ultimately orchestrated by Jean Françaix in 1945. It tells the story of Babar, an elephant that flees the jungle and finds his way to the city where he is educated and then brings his knowledge back to the elephant realm.

The present arrangement and translation by English composer David Mathews made its Abu Dhabi premiere by the NSO Chamber Music Ensemble, conducted by Musical Director Andrew Berryman and narrated by Special Guest Damian Watson, Abu Dhabi Classic FM's 'Breakfast Classics' presenter, where his 'Kids' Classics' have become essential listening on the morning school run. Damian 'Abu Dhabized' "The Story of Babar" to the delight and laughter of the audience, who gave a standing ovation at the finale.

World Champion Greek Pianist Ioannis Potamouis performed W. A. Mozart's "Twelve Variations in C on the French Song 'Ah Vous Dirai-je, Maman', K. 265", a piano composition written around 1781 whose melodies have been used for many children's songs such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star', 'Baa, Baa, Black Sheep' and the 'Alphabet Song'.





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The NSO String Quartet performed Maurice Ravel's "Mother Goose" ("Ma Mere L'oye"), an accompaniment for the animated film depicting the three stories of Pavanne – Sleeping Beauty, Tom Thumb and The Fairy Garden, which was followed shortly afterwards by Andrew Berryman on bagpipes. Pianists Alex Tchobanov and Robert Millner gave a rendition of Gabriel Fauré's "Dolly Suite" op. 56. Written in 1893, this composition is a collection of short pieces written for piano four-hands.

Music lovers can look forward to the NSO Symphony Orchestra's next performance on 12 and 13 December on the Abu Dhabi Corniche breakwater for the BBC's 'Blue Planet Live in Concert', to celebrate the stop-over in the capital of the 2014/15 Volvo Ocean Race. Following that, the NSO Chamber Orchestra's first opera production in January will feature the seasonal, one-act opera "Amahl and the Night Visitors".

Saturday's concert was performed in support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of the UAE and was sponsored by Anastasia Africa by Menawa, with the continued support of Abu Dhabi Classic FM and Brighton College-Abu Dhabi.

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